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United Nations

MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP SECRETARIAT

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Mountain Partnership

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ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Rome, 2024

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Akhar women return home from the farm in Myanmar.
©Kyaw Kyaw Winn

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Woman high angle technician working in the Cape mountains, South Africa

©Roshni Lodhia

FOREWORD

Rosalaura Romeo
©Antonella Di Girolamo

The year 2023 was momentous for mountains, as they finally featured centre stage in a number of major international processes and platforms.

The start of 2023 marked the closure of the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 and the beginning of the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027, a framework to address the environmental crisis that mountains are facing.

Following the efforts of many Mountain Partnership (MP) government members, mountains were included in the global stocktake at the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The final document approved a dialogue at the 60th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) on mountains and climate change – an excellent opportunity to promote engagement among governments and civil society and to mobilize support and awareness for mountain issues. Importantly, the UNFCCC Nairobi Work Programme identified mountains, high-latitude areas and the cryosphere as a priority thematic area for 2024.

We welcomed the launch of a new mountain knowledge hub, the Science and Knowledge Advisory Committee of the MP, which developed from the IYM 2022 Open-ended Scientific Committee as a permanent body dedicated to science-policy dialogue, advocacy and communications priorities. We look forward to engaging with key members to continue leveraging this valuable resource.

International Mountain Day 2023, with its theme “Restoring mountain ecosystems”, was an opportunity to shine a spotlight on mountains in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, co-led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Through events, a global communication campaign and a joint FAO-UNEP-Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) report, we shared best practices for strengthening the resilience of mountain ecosystems and livelihoods, reducing vulnerability, and building the capacity of mountain people to adapt to daily threats and extreme climatic events.

We believe that for the lasting protection of mountain resources, a generational shift is needed. At this year’s IPROMO course – the MPS’ annual summer school – participants launched the Mountain Youth Hub, a platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange and innovation. In October, the Hub participated in the UN Global Indigenous Youth Forum, advocating for a more nurturing environment for mountain youth and future generations.

Empowering mountain producers to improve their livelihoods was a key MPS focus in 2023. We launched the Business Incubator and Accelerator (BIA) for Mountains and Islands in collaboration with the UNDP-GEF Small Grant Programme. The BIA promotes innovative entrepreneurship in food, fashion and tourism value chains through grants, capacity development and tailored technical assistance.

Our mission for 2024 is to continue advancing the mountain agenda, stepping up our advocacy efforts in global policy fora, strengthening members’ capacity to promote solutions and innovate, engaging youth and fostering cooperation, while attracting investments for a more resilient and sustainable future. We are counting on every one of you!

Rosalaura Romeo

Rosalaura Romeo
Mountain Partnership Secretariat Coordinator

Advocating for sustainable mountain futures

Grupo Los Alvarez from Peru perform at the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 closing ceremony

© FAO/Giulio Napolitano

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat hosted the closing ceremony for the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 (IYM 2022) at FAO headquarters, with high-level statements and a concert of mountain music. In a video message, UN Secretary-General António Guterres thanked the Mountain Partnership and looked forward to continued UN support for sustainable mountain development, led by FAO.

The main outcome of IYM 2022 was the United Nation General Assembly's declaration of 2023–2027 as Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions. Seizing this important opportunity to advance the mountain agenda, the MPS has spearheaded a taskforce to develop the global framework for implementation of the Five Years of Action. Together with the Government of Kyrgyzstan, the MPS has also facilitated a communication campaign on the Five Years of Action, including development of a logo, visual identity, webpage, promotional video and Trello board.

Members launch a global mountain framework

On 19 July, MP members launched the global framework for implementation of the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027, at a side event at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2023. The global framework is intended for use by governments and all relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable mountain development at national and local level. Over 60 UN Member States participated in the event, which was organized by the Government of Kyrgyzstan and the MPS and co-sponsored by the Governments of Italy, Malawi, Nepal and Peru.

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!

Participants at the HLPF side event

©Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations

Promoting the science-policy dialogue

The MPS facilitated the transition of the Open-ended Scientific Committee of IYM 2022 into the Science and Knowledge Advisory Committee, a permanent body strategically designed to underpin the MP's work and bolster the alliance's advocacy and communication goals through science-policy dialogue. The Committee has committed to producing policy briefs and supporting the MP's advocacy processes.

圆桌论坛：跨学科与跨文化
的未来山地构建
Round Table Forum: A Roadmap
for Mountain Futures

Speakers at the Mountain Futures Conference

©Centre for Mountain Futures

FAO Director-General QU Dongyu speaks at the Nepal High-Level Side Event “Call of the Mountain: Who saves us from the climate crisis?” at COP 28

© FAO/Russel Cabanting

A momentous UN Climate Change Conference for mountains

The first ever global stocktake – an assessment of progress since the 2015 Paris Agreement – was launched at COP 28 in Dubai. Following the efforts of many MP government members, mountains were included in the global stocktake text. The document includes five mentions of mountains and an official request for dialogue on mountains and climate change at the 60th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, to be held in June 2024.

On 9 November, the MPS hosted a side event in the Cryosphere Pavilion: “Elevating mountains and the cryosphere to the forefront of international processes”, which examined the links between security and climate change in mountains. Speakers included representatives from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Meteorological Organization, the Alpine Convention, the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, the Aspen International Mountain Foundation, and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean.

On 2 December, the Government of Nepal hosted a high-level roundtable: “Call of the mountains: who saves us from the climate crisis?”. The MPS facilitated the participation of FAO Director-General QU Dongyu, who called for a wide range of stakeholders to make a concerted effort to address the root causes of degraded mountain areas. Participants included Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Prime Minister of Andorra Xavier Espot Zamora, and Kyrgyzstan Foreign Affairs Minister Jeenbek Kulubayev.

A forum on the role of mountains within the context of the Nairobi Work Programme – a UNFCCC workstream – was held the same day. The MPS provided key background information to support the FAO delegation at the event. The forum resulted in mountains, high-latitude areas and the cryosphere being declared a priority thematic area for 2024 within the Nairobi Work Programme.

More protection for the world's water towers

In the lead-up to the UN 2023 Water Conference, the MPS successfully submitted a commitment of action: "Advancing sustainable mountain development and protecting the 'water towers' of the world". Rooted in the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions, the pledge recognizes that benefits derived from mountain regions are essential for sustainable development and that mountain ecosystems play a crucial role in providing water and other critical resources and services to a significant number of the world's growing population. The expected impacts of this commitment include increased financial support and investment for sustainable mountain development and greater protection for biodiversity and endangered species.

Glacial lake in Türkiye
©Fatih Yilmaz

During the conference, the MPS and the Government of Andorra held an online session to discuss how to bring mountains to the forefront of international processes, particularly the Water Action Agenda. Participants included representatives from the Governments of Andorra, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Peru, the MPS, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Bank, and Andorra Research and Innovation.

Mountain valley river in China
©Rongkun Liu

Lake Dzhangyskol, Russia
©Vladimir Ivanov

FAO reaffirms its commitment to mountains

Twenty-two countries officially requested to discuss the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions at the 174th session of the FAO Council, held in December. Reaffirming FAO's leading role as the main UN agency working to protect mountains, the Council recommended that it support Member Countries to scale up sustainable mountain development and raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities of mountain regions, and called for development of the Global Action Plan on Mountain Regions Development 2023–2027.

FAO
FIAT PANIS
COUNCIL

174th Session of the FAO Council
© FAO/Alessandra Benedetti

Mountains at the forefront of the climate agenda

In 2023, the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) strategically placed mountains at the forefront of the climate agenda, offering valuable insights at critical events such as UNFCCC COP 28. The MRI flagship activity GEO Mountains hosted a workshop series to unite data providers and users in mountain regions, collaborating with regional partners, the MRI's Mountain Observatories Working Group, and the World Meteorological Organization. This initiative led to the establishment of the Central Asia Mountain Observatories Network – MRI's inaugural regional mountain observatory network. GEO Mountains also unveiled the Mountains Uncovered series, showcasing and visualizing data at mountain-range scale, and released an update of its General Inventory. MRI's Elevation-Dependent Climate Change Working Group held a workshop to refine the Uniform High-Elevation Observing Platform (UHOP) concept, shaping the forthcoming UHOP Protocol. A new MRI Mountain Social-Ecological Futures Working Group was also established.

Workshops boost regional collaboration and data collection

©Mountain Research Initiative

Groundwater cryosphere workshop participants

©Mountain Research Initiative

Sustainable mountain guiding in a changing world

Mountain guides are exposed to rapid and unprecedented changes in their work environment due to the impacts of climate change. The Zero Water Day Partnership supported the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA) to develop a statement on sustainable mountain guiding, which was presented at COP 28. Sustainable mountain guiding seeks to maintain the traditional values of the profession, while ensuring that it grows and can meet the challenges of a complex, changing world. Sustainable mountain guiding would be implemented through the training of mountain guides, and in alignment with IFMGA professional standards of practice of mountain guides.

Trekking in Antarctica

©Tyler Wilkinson-Ray

Third Caucasus Mountain Forum supports regional exchange

Caucasus Mountain Forum

Panelists at the Third Caucasus Mountain Forum discussed sustainable tourism and climate change adaptation

©Sustainable Caucasus

Engaged audience at the Third Caucasus Mountain Forum

©Sustainable Caucasus

In July 2023, the Caucasus Network for Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions (Sustainable Caucasus) brought together 200 scientists, policymakers and practitioners in Kutaisi, Georgia from the six Caucasus countries and beyond to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing sustainable tourism development in the Caucasus Region. The five-day Caucasus Mountain Forum featured an array of plenary, research and poster sessions, as well as workshops, field visits in the Svaneti region and side events. The outcome was the adoption of a resolution calling on all parties to seek synergy and address barriers that are impeding sustainable tourism development in mountain areas, and to assist decision-makers in facilitating implementation of sound policies, strategies and initiatives across the Caucasus region.

Key events in 2023

The following is a selection of key events held in 2023, where the MPS provided support and/or participated, to advocate for mountain causes and people:

First meeting of the Task Force for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions (virtual; 5 April)
Third Mountain Futures Conference (Kunming, China; 16–18 April)
Mountain Partnership Steering Committee meeting (virtual; 20 April)
Closing ceremony – International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 (Rome, Italy; 26 April)
First meeting of the Science and Knowledge Advisory Committee of the Mountain Partnership (virtual; 14 June)
Third Caucasus Mountain Forum (Kutaisi, Georgia; 4–6 July)
OSCE High-Level Conference on Climate Change (Vienna, Austria; 7 July)
IPROMO 2023 (Pieve Tesino and Ormea, Italy; 11–25 July)
Second meeting of the Science and Knowledge Advisory Committee of the Mountain Partnership (virtual; 4 October)
Carpathian Convention COP 7 (Belgrade, Serbia; 11–13 October)
Second meeting of the Task Force for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions (virtual; 23 October)
Mountain Innovation Fair (Bolzano, Italy; 24–25 October)
Mountain Partnership Steering Committee meeting (virtual; 26 October)
GROW Agrobiodiversity in a Changing Climate 2023 (virtual; 14–24 November)
16th Focal Point Forum of the Nairobi Work Programme (Dubai, United Arab Emirates; 2 December)
Enabling resilient and sustainable food systems in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (Kathmandu, Nepal; 6–8 December)
International Mountain Day high-level event at UNFCCC COP 28 (Dubai, United Arab Emirates; 11 December)
International Mountain Day technical session (virtual; 13 December)

Side events

Side events at the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (virtual; 7–8 March)
Side events at the UN 2023 Water Conference (New York, USA; 22–23 March)
High-level Political Forum side event – Promoting the Five Year Action Plan: Mountains as key to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (New York, USA; 19 July)
United Nations Global Indigenous Youth Forum side event – Mountain Youth Hub: Elevating Indigenous youth voices for a better mountain future (Rome, Italy; 18 October)
Expo 2023 Doha: Agrobiodiversity and innovation workshop (Doha, Qatar; 22 November)
Side events at UNFCCC COP 28 (Dubai, United Arab Emirates; 20 November – 13 December)

Youth inspiring an equitable future

Children walk through the forest in India

©Suhas Ramegowda

Youth play a pivotal role in safeguarding the future of the world's mountain regions. Their engagement and commitment are instrumental in fostering sustainability. With their innate ability to embrace innovation, young people have the potential to champion nature-based solutions and advocate for policies that prioritize the conservation of mountain ecosystems. By harnessing their energy and passion, the younger generation can lead initiatives that contribute to the resilience of mountain communities and environments, ensuring the health of these vital landscapes for generations to come. By empowering youth, we are nurturing the stewards of tomorrow who will contribute to the conservation and sustainable development of our world's majestic mountainous areas.

Participants in IPROMO 2023
©FAO/Allison Bozzi

New platform mobilizes youth action

A group of young delegates attending the 2023 IPROMO summer school launched the Mountain Youth Hub. Backed by the MPS, the Hub is a dynamic platform dedicated to empowering and mobilizing youth across mountainous regions worldwide. By providing a space for collaboration, knowledge exchange and innovation, the youth platform is poised to make meaningful impact, ensuring that the UN Five Years of Action ushers in a brighter and more sustainable future for mountain communities around the world.

Indigenous youth discuss mountain solutions

Indigenous youth from mountain regions worldwide convened to exchange insights on opportunities at a MP side event during the United Nations Global Indigenous Youth Forum, on 18 October 2023. Moderated by Nikki Santos, MP Goodwill Ambassador and Executive Director of the Aspen Institute's Center for Native American Youth, the interactive session focused on solutions to support youth in mountains and on how the Mountain Youth Hub can help to drive change. Contributions were made by Indigenous youth from mountain regions in Belize, Canada, Nepal, Peru, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. Outcomes of the discussion included a call for increased awareness of Indigenous-led mountain networks and recognition of the disproportionate impact of climate change on Indigenous Peoples in mountains. Also highlighted were the importance of digital tools for preserving culture and traditions and the need for more youth-driven initiatives to safeguard Indigenous Peoples' knowledge.

Students explore a greener future for mountain tourism

MP members Tourism for Resilient Society and Environmental Sustainability and the Rotaract Club of Mountaineering-Kathmandu jointly organized a workshop on greening the future of tourism. The event brought together 25 participants, comprising students from various colleges studying travel and tourism and environmental science. The workshop aimed to foster discussions on sustainable tourism and green investments. Guest speaker Ian Wall, an expert in sustainable mountain tourism, shared valuable insights, including Nepal's journey towards sustainable tourism. The event heightened awareness about green investments, sustainable tourism, and amplifying marginalized voices in adventure tourism.

GREENING THE FUTURE TOURISM- A World Cafe Workshop
October 7, 2023
Utpala Cafe, Bo

Participants at the mountain tourism workshop
©Prakriti Kafle

Students in four countries collaborate on sustainable rural and mountain development

With a focus on sustainable development in rural and mountainous areas, the Institute of Natural Resource Sciences at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) in Switzerland actively engages in exchanges with universities and institutions worldwide. In 2021, a virtual course was conducted together with universities in Kyrgyzstan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Students worked on the theme "Potential of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals to advance sustainable mountain development and strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems in mountain areas" for their respective regions. To deepen the virtual collaboration, ZHAW lecturer Peter Marty visited Karakoram International University (KIU) in Pakistan in 2023 and interacted with Pakistani students in on-site classes. Zafar Khan from KIU will visit ZHAW in 2024.

ZHAW lecturer visits Karakoram International University and interacts with Pakistani students

©Peter Marty 2023

11 December
International Mountain Day
2023
CGIAR
FIAT PANIS
RESTORING
MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS
International Mountain Day 2023 Celebration
Mountain Partnership
#COP28

Global commitment to restore mountain ecosystems

Rosalaura Romeo, Coordinator, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, speaks at COP 28 on International Mountain Day

©David Goff/Analog Production for FAO, IFAD, CGIAR, Rockefeller Foundation

Given the key role that mountain ecosystems play in providing vital ecosystem services directly to 1.1 billion mountain people and billions of others living in connected lowland areas, International Mountain Day (IMD) 2023's theme was "Restoring mountain ecosystems".

Half of humanity depends on mountains for the daily provision of freshwater. Healthy mountain ecosystems also cool local temperatures, increase water retention, provide carbon storage, and reduce the risk of erosion and landslides. Yet climate change, biodiversity loss, food insecurity, and pollution and waste are affecting mountain ecosystems at a faster rate than many other terrestrial habitats.

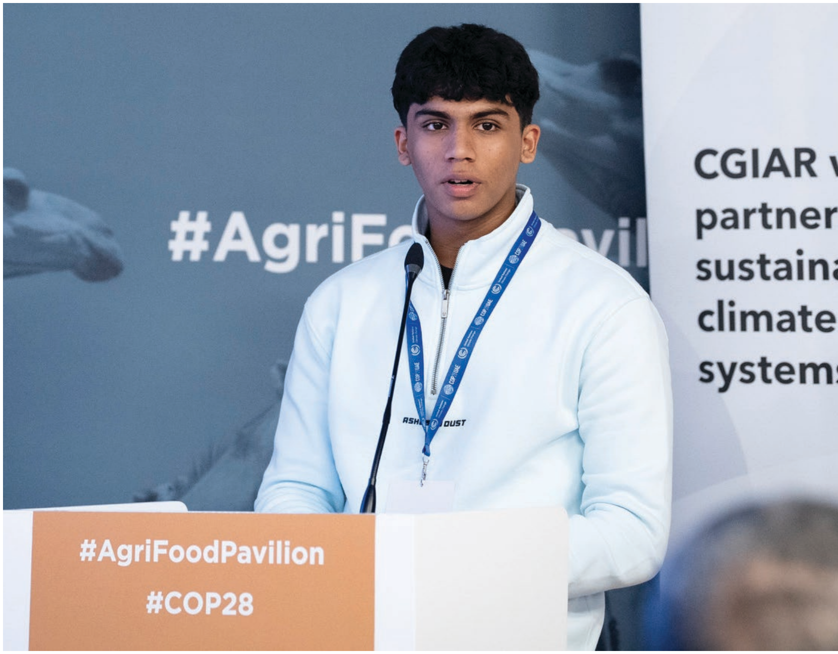
Governments, organizations and individuals in 30 countries marked IMD with more than 70 events. As the lead UN agency responsible for coordinating IMD, FAO supported partners' celebrations around the world. The MPS organized a high-level event on 11 December in the Food and Agriculture Pavilion at COP 28 in Dubai. During the event, the MPS, FAO and UNEP launched a joint report, Restoring mountain ecosystems, which offers examples of successful mountain ecosystem restoration projects. FAO Director-General QU Dongyu highlighted how healthy mountains can protect and help us adapt to the impacts of climate change. Other speakers included Ambassador Nurlan Aitmurzaev,

Volunteers plant trees in the mountains at Gohar Abad in Pakistan

©Meherban Karim

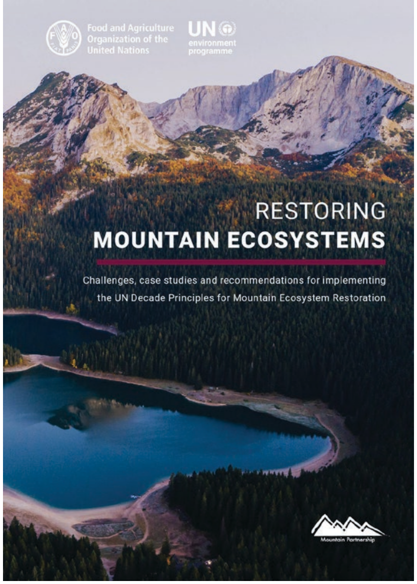
Manan Nailwal Girish Chander, Jumeirah College student and Zero Water Day Partnership participant, speaking at the IMD event at COP 28

©David Goff/Analog Production for FAO, IFAD, CGIAR, Rockefeller Foundation



Kyrgyzstan's Special Envoy on Mountain Issues; Carles Miquel, Andorra's Secretary of State for Energy Transition, Transportation and Mobility; Francesco Corvaro, Italy's Special Envoy for Climate Change at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Bruno Pozzi, Deputy Director of the Ecosystems Division at UNEP; Tara Gujadhur, Co-Director of the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre in Lao People's Democratic Republic; and Manan Nailwal Girish Chander of Jumeirah College in the United Arab Emirates, a participant in the Zero Water Day Partnership.

> “As we celebrate International Mountain Day, I urge all stakeholders, from governments and NGOs to local communities and individuals, to join hands in a renewed commitment to restoring our mountains and including mountain regions in the political agenda.”
>
> **– QU Dongyu, Director-General, FAO**


Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
UN environment programme
RESTORING
MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS
Challenges, case studies and recommendations for implementing the UN Decade Principles for Mountain Ecosystem Restoration
Mountain Partnership

Restoring mountain ecosystems

©FAO & UNEP

Implementing the UN Decade Restoration Principles for mountains

In line with the theme of this year's IMD, the MPS at FAO and UNEP published *Restoring mountain ecosystems*, which analyses ten mountain ecosystem restoration projects and recommends how the UN Decade's Ten Principles for Ecosystem Restoration can be applied to mountain ecosystems. Underlining the main drivers of mountain ecosystem degradation, the report suggests what needs to be done to conserve and restore mountain ecosystems, using case studies from around the world.

A lens on mountain ecosystem restoration

More than 465 photos were received from 56 countries for the 2023 IMD photo contest on mountain ecosystem restoration coordinated by the MPS. Marc Foggin from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland won with his photo "Mountain farming in Gharmin village, in the heart of the Yagnob Valley", taken in Tajikistan.

Mountain Farming in Yaghnob National Park in Tajikistan

©Marc Foggin

Success stories of mountain ecosystem restoration

On 13 December, the MPS, together with the FAO/Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism-led Task Force on Best Practices, held a technical session, "Sharing knowledge throughout the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration: Good practices for the restoration of mountain ecosystems". The online event showcased good practices and success stories from mountain ecosystem restoration initiatives around the world. It included two panels, with the first highlighting FAO's role in guiding the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and promoting restorative practices, and the second spotlighting successful restoration projects in the Andes, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan.

Mountain gorilla grazes on foliage in Volcanoes National Park, Kinigi, Rwanda

© FAO/Steve Terrill

Liana trees in the Yoko Forest, Democratic Republic of the Congo

©FAO/Giulio Napolitano

Third Mountain Futures Conference examines sustainable solutions

Over 200 participants from 20 countries gathered on 16–18 April 2023 for the Third Mountain Futures Conference: “Mountain Communities in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework” in Kunming, China. Launched to support the 15th COP to the CBD, and implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the conference revolved around four main themes: scientific exploration, ecological restoration, Indigenous wisdom, and future living. A range of plenary and parallel sessions, workshops and exhibitions highlighted innovative sustainable development in mountain regions. The conference was hosted by the Kunming Institute of Botany of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the UNEP International Ecosystem Management Partnership, FAO, the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, World Agroforestry and ICIMOD. Also in 2023, the International Joint Laboratory for Mountain Agroecology, supported by the Department of Science and Technology of Yunnan Province, was inaugurated.

2023第三届山地未来国际会议 III MOUNTAIN FUTURES CONFERENCE

Mountain Futures Centre, Kunming

©Robert J. Zomer

Global efforts to halt plastic pollution in mountains

Following the UN Environment Assembly Resolution 5/14 in 2022, the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) to End Plastic Pollution was established. The aim is that signatory countries work together towards a strong agreement to end plastic pollution. On 23 May 2023, HAC members Austria and Georgia co-hosted a webinar on "Plastics on the Peak: Eliminating the releases of plastic waste to air, water and land in mountainous regions" with the support of GRID-Arendal and UNEP. The event highlighted how sensitive mountain environments can be kept waste-free and how the ongoing negotiations can consider specific challenges of mountain regions, such as remoteness and lack of infrastructure.

Plastic pollution along the trail in Kotor, Montenegro

©Andrei Tataurov

Carpathian Convention hosts 7th Conference of the Parties

The 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (CC COP7 brought together more than 180 delegates and observers from the Carpathians and beyond. Held in Belgrade, Serbia on 11–13 October 2023, CC COP7 provided a crucial mandate and instruments for further work on the sustainable future of the Carpathian region. Environment ministers and senior officials adopted the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework, a comprehensive instrument supporting implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at the Carpathian level. The Framework is accompanied by the Carpathian Vision 2050, corresponding to the global vision of living in harmony with nature. COP7 also saw the renewal of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the CBD, the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention, which aims to enhance implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework in mountain regions. The year 2023 marked the 20th anniversary of the Carpathian Convention.

CARPATHIAN CONVENTION

Carpathian Convntion COP7 family photo

©Carpathian Convention Sec.

Profiling mountains within the Global Biodiversity Framework's implementation

In October 2023, during the 25th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UNEP joined forces with the CBD Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, the Mountain Research Initiative, the Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment, various governments and others to host an open side event. Called the “Mountain Biodiversity Like-Minded Working Meeting”, the event aimed to collect views and discuss possible scenarios for the Programme of Work (PoW) on mountain biodiversity. While deliberations at SBSTTA 26 and COP 16 CBD, due to be held in 2024, will determine the link between the PoWs and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF), the PoW on mountain biodiversity will continue to be a possible mechanism for implementing the KM-GBF.

Flamingos near Artos Mountain in Türkiye

©Fatih Yilmaz

Mongolian mountain communities are custodians of 'territories of life'

A substantial part of the planet's biodiversity is found within mountain territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. But despite growing recognition of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs), also known as 'territories of life' in international conservation policies, many suffer serious neglect in terms of inclusion in national policies and practices. For the first time in Mongolia, coordinated by the JASIL Environment and Development Association in 2023, local communities representing herders and user groups of pasture, forest and mountain grassland, have been included in the ICCA registry. The Bayanbulag forest group uses and protects the Hangai Mountains' forests and pastureland and the Karatau herders group sustainably use and conserve the Altai Mountains' seasonal grazing land. In both cases, these local communities are monitoring biodiversity (wildlife and plant) species in their territory, along with livelihood improvement activities of herders.

Bayanbulag summer pasture

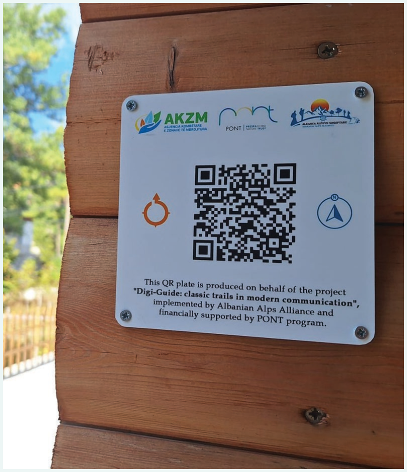
©Hijaba Ykhanbai

Digi-guides in Albanian Alps National Park

The Albanian Alps Alliance actively promotes environmental conservation and socioeconomic growth in Northern Albania. Implemented throughout 2023 in the Albanian Alps National Park, the Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust-funded digi-guide project focused on the digitalization of trails through innovative QR-coded metallic plates, enhancing tourist information and revitalizing old trails. These plates, installed along the classic routes, provide links to detailed content about specific checkpoints, locations, distances and more. The pioneering approach not only boosts tourism products, but also ensures the promotion and protection of natural monuments.

Albanian Alps National Park

©Petrit Imeraj


AKZM
PONT
This QR plate is produced on behalf of the project "Digi-Guide: classic trails in modern communication", implemented by Albanian Alps Alliance and financially supported by PONT program.

Digital guide for the Albanian Alps National Park

©Petrit Imeraj

A transboundary mountain biosphere reserve for Italy and Slovenia

In September 2023, the joint Slovenian-Italian application for the establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve – Julian Alps – was submitted to the Secretariat of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme. In such reserves, countries cooperate on key issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of shared ecosystems and strive to achieve the three key objectives of MAB in the long term: conservation, development and logistics. The plan to merge the existing Triglav National Park in Slovenia and the Julian Prealps Nature Park in Italy would create a transboundary biosphere reserve where both parties would foster the linkage between people and their territory, promote cooperation between local stakeholders, and raise awareness of key environmental and socioeconomic issues in the Julian Alps.

Application for Slovenian-Italian transboundary Julian Alps biosphere reserve is submitted to the UNESCO MAB Secretariat

©Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Slovenia to UNESCO

A sustainable mountain destination in Saudi Arabia

Protecting and restoring the natural environment and preserving the cultural heritage of the Sarawat Mountains of Aseer is a core objective of Soudah Development (SD), which seeks to develop Saudi Arabia's tourism industry. Within the SD project area are several national parks (King Abdullah, King Abdulaziz and Soudah National Parks) that have become degraded in recent decades, due to unregulated use and exploitation. In 2023, a reintroduction programme released 23 Nubian Ibex (Capra nubiana) and 10 Arabian Gazelle (Gazella arabica) – the start of an ongoing initiative that aims to establish self-sustaining populations of these dwindling, but flagship species.

Soudah National Park

©Soudah Development

Innovation for mountains

Mussel harvesting in Tangub City, the Philippines
©FAO/David Hogsholt

The Mountain Partnership works to promote mountain communities' resilience to climate and other shocks through initiatives at all levels, from local to global. To further the impacts, the MPS implements innovative solutions to enhance efficiency and sustainability.

The Business Incubator and Accelerator (BIA) for Mountains and Islands was launched in 2023 in collaboration with the UNDP-GEF Small Grant Programme. It is supporting innovative entrepreneurship in food, fashion and tourism value chains through grants, capacity development activities and tailored technical assistance.

With support from the Yunus Environment Hub, BIA incubated the project proposals of over 100 producer organizations representing more than 37 500 small-scale producers (including over 17 000 women and 9 000 youths) from the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Peru, the Philippines and Uganda. Twenty country-level training initiatives were delivered, offering guidance on funding proposals and agricultural policy and value chain analysis. More than 300 individual coaching sessions were conducted on proposal preparation, technical assistance, and collecting baseline data on social, economic and environmental indicators to assess project impact. Fifty-three organizations have been selected to receive grants and acceleration services, further propelling their growth and development.

Strengthening digital food systems in the Rwenzori Mountains

Nestled in Uganda's Rwenzori Mountains, the town of Kasese has a 41 percent stunting rate among children. With a community mandate, MP member GlobalRise designed, tested and deployed a Community Nutrition Program (CNP) in a subcounty with 1 650 households. Forming a team comprising indigenous community-based organizations (Mbalhamia Healing Forest, AdFORD) and Rwenzori International University, GlobalRise led the group to receive a BIA grant, to strengthen its Digital Food System. This multi-thematic intervention tethers the CNP to a farm tech/drone platform that creates producer incentives for sustainably improving the health and financial resilience of families, and is embedded in climate-smart features.

The Community Nutrition Program developed in the Rwenzori Mountains aims to address stunting with new technology
©Karen Salazar, GlobalRise

Mount Elgon in Kapchorwa district, Uganda
©FAO/Matthias Mugisha

Precision agriculture in FAO's rooftop garden

Plantiverse, developed by MP member Ecobubble, is a precision agriculture platform that uses multispectral cameras, artificial intelligence of things (AIoT), sensors and satellite imagery to collect data on plants and their environment. The data are then used to automate water, nutrient and pest control, ensuring precise and efficient resource use. This technology presents an opportunity to alleviate food shortages where agricultural land is limited, such as in mountains. The MPS-managed vegetable garden growing on the rooftop of FAO headquarters uses *Plantiverse* to monitor and optimize crop water regimes – crucial for saving water and ensuring plant health. The target beneficiaries of *Plantiverse* are primarily small- to medium-scale farmers seeking to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability, particularly in regions facing soil and water scarcity. With *Plantiverse*, these farmers can embrace sustainable farming practices to achieve more efficient resource use and higher crop yields.

Spectral cameras in the FAO rooftop garden
© FAO/Giorgio Grussu

Spectral cameras in the FAO rooftop garden
© FAO/Julie Cheek

Oca from Peru with the Mountain Partnership Product label

©Christian Ricardo Carrasco

New Mountain Partnership products

Several new mountain products received the Mountain Partnership Product label in 2023. To date, 45 products bear the label. The Mountain Partnership Products initiative is championing ethical and fair value chains for organic mountain products. The label promotes the conservation of agrobiodiversity and preservation of ancient techniques, while paving the way for new market opportunities for indigenous crop varieties.

Organic wildflower honey cultivates sweet success for Mongolian beekeepers

Within the highlands and lowlands of Mongolia's forest-steppe Selenge province lies the perfect spot to cultivate one of nature's sweetest gifts: wildflower honey. Beekeepers strategically position their hives in remote, uncontaminated fields, allowing their bees to forage on the diverse local flora. This ensures that their honey is organic, high-quality, and meets the standards of both the local participatory guarantee system (PGS) and the Mongolian Bee Farmers Society. However, the beekeepers must often travel long distances to reach the wild forest areas where their bees thrive. They also face financial pressures due to high production costs and limited market access. In response to these challenges, three cooperatives – Kharaagiin Bayan Urs, Munkhtsovdon, and Organic Honey – joined forces to collect and harvest organic wildflower honey. The cooperatives' 43 members (29 of them women) support each other, and since 2020, the organic honey from Selenge province has been marketed using the Mountain Partnership Product label. This has led to a rise in PGS-certified producers, from 19 to 27, and a 17 percent increase in overall honey production since 2019.

Beekeepers from Mongolia present their honey
©Enkhtsetseg

Karatau autumn pasture
©Hijaba Ykhanbai

Product development featuring the Nilgiri Mountains

In collaboration with the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, India-based social enterprise Last Forest has achieved milestones in product development. These include innovative packaging design, with new coffee and honey labels, and a series of collectibles showcasing animals from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Such initiatives underscore Last Forest's dedication to sustainable practices and highlight its commitment to product development that aligns with its mission to make a positive impact on both consumers and communities.

rosemary
honey
cinnamon
honey

Honey display
©Isabel Tadmiri – Last Forest

Mountain innovation takes centre stage

More than 30 innovative approaches were displayed at the first Mountain Innovation Fair, hosted 23–25 October 2023 in Bolzano, Italy by UNEP, the Centre for Development and Environment in Bern, and Eurac Research together with the GLOMOS programme it runs with UNU-EHS. The fair was funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation and welcomed more than 65 participants, picked by a Selection Committee composed of regional experts from the Alps, Balkans, Caucasus, Carpathians, East Africa and Southern Africa. Highlights included an inspiring PeakTalk, a colourful marketplace, and workshops to co-create innovative approaches in a fictive scenario.

Mountain Innovation Fair 2023

©Eurac Research/Andrea De Giovanni

Promoting integrated mountain safety in Pakistan

Mountain communities in northern Pakistan, from Gilgit-Baltistan to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, are highly vulnerable and at the frontline of natural disasters, including flashfloods, glacial lake outburst floods, avalanches, earthquakes and landslides. To reduce exposure to such risks and build communities' resilience, the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat Pakistan implemented the Promoting Integrated Mountain Safety in Northern Pakistan (PIMSNP) project from 2019 to 2023. The initiative involved constructing 45 mitigation infrastructures, benefiting 12 494 people, structural retrofitting of 29 schools for 4 385 students and staff, and the establishment of 8 Automated Early Warning Systems. Over 200 capacity-building sessions were conducted, benefiting 368 731 individuals. Through this multifaceted approach, PIMSNP has not only safeguarded lives, livelihoods and assets, but has also promoted sustainable development in mountainous terrains grappling with multiple hazards.

PIMSNP flood mitigation wall protecting communities in Manshera

©Aga Khan Agency for Habitat Pakistan

Mountains of Ñambi in the south of Colombia

©Nicolas Pérez

A regional consortium on soil and ecosystem services

Argentina (INTA), Brazil (EMBRAPA), Colombia (Center for Highland Studies) and Uruguay (INIA) are collaborating under the guidance of the French Agency of Science to generate low-cost protocols for evaluating soil ecosystem services in intensively used productive systems across different scenarios in Latin America. While Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay will assess ecosystem services in soils transformed by soy and pasture production, the Center for Highland Studies in Colombia will evaluate the ecosystem services provided by soils associated with coffee production in the mountain systems of the Colombian Central Andes. The project is funded by the European Union through the European Joint Programme-Soils.

A new Community of Practice in Ecuador

Ecuador is one of the seven member countries of the Andean Mountain Initiative. Among activities conducted in 2023 to promote sustainable mountain development was the launch of the Mountain Minga (MM), a multisectoral, multiscale Community of Practice (CoP) that contributes to the management of national mountain knowledge. The MM seeks to: create synergies and collaboration among the different actors involved; exchange experiences, information and visions; and generate inputs and feedback on public policies based on good practices and lessons learned. It is made up of a group of institutions committed to the sustainable management of high-altitude ecosystems, and during its first year, the CoP implemented 17 local activities involving more than 1 000 people. The MM also established eight technical workgroups that generated important contributions for the National Action Plan for Páramos of Ecuador. The Plan is seeking to protect these valuable high-altitude ecoregions (*páramos*), which provide essential ecosystem services such as water production, irrigation and carbon storage and sequestration.

Mountain Minga promotes sustainable mountain development in Ecuador

©GIZ Ecuador – Mountain Conservation Programme

Virtual mountain education in Argentina

The Government of Argentina organized institutional strengthening and capacity development initiatives in 2023. These included organizing virtual courses for training in environmental action, incorporating mountain issues into secondary education curricula, and sending participants to the international IPROMO course to improve local capacities for sustainable mountain development. An Argentine Guide for Mountaineers mobile app under development will contain information on the care and protection of mountain environments. Finally, preparations for measuring the Mountain Green Coverage Index were made in line with Sustainable Development Goal 15.

Mountains of Argentina
© FAO/Thomas Hofer

Gas canister recycling plan wins Mountain Protection Award

A recycling system for empty gas canisters won the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation's Mountain Protection Award for 2023. At a ceremony held in Trabzon, Türkiye on 21 October, Brazilian project Gear Tips Recycling Program was awarded the prize for its efforts to collect and recycle cartridges, in order to promote sustainable waste management and disposal. In Brazil, nearly 2 million gas cartridges are sold annually for use in stoves during outdoor activities, many of which are disposed of without proper sorting, and end up in landfills or local dumps.

Trekking in the mountains of Brazil

©UIAA/Raphaela Pichler

Sowing the seeds of women's empowerment

In Nepal, women entrepreneurs of Barhabise municipality have constructed a nursery, with support from the project "Economic Empowerment of Women through Forest Solutions", funded by the International Development Research Centre and jointly implemented by ForestAction Nepal, the Association of Family Forest Owners Nepal, Himawanti Nepal and the Federation of Forest-based Industry and Trade Nepal. The project officially passed ownership of the nursery to the women's group in October 2023. The handover aims to empower the local government and women entrepreneurs and seeks to advance the holistic development of rural women through increased accountability of government authorities in economic, social and political affairs.

Nursery management

©ForestAction Nepal

Lebanon Mountain Trail generates local jobs

The Trail Conservation and Employment Project has conducted trail maintenance and upgrades on 27 sections and 4 side trails of the Lebanon Mountain Trail, generating short-term employment opportunities for more than 1 600 people, including 365 women and 54 persons with disabilities, in over 45 villages. The project, implemented by the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association in partnership with the International Labour Organization as part of the Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme, funded by the German Government through the German Development Bank, included 45 training sessions focused on trail maintenance. Three additional training sessions held for 26 stewards covered technical and administrative aspects of trail maintenance. The training also emphasized environmental awareness and stewardship.

Hiking guides using directional bars for people with visual impairments

©Lebanon Mountain Trail Association

Preserving textiles and flax cultivation in Greece

The University of the Mountains (UoM) in Greece, with its teams of volunteers, continued its creative actions in 2023. From February 2023, the UoM, together with the Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas, began implementing a research project on the design and development of innovative digital services based on archival material of the UoM and the Penelope Gandhi Mission on textile art and thread production in mountainous areas of Crete. The project is financed by the Region of Crete. Meanwhile, the UoM and the Penelope Gandhi Mission team are continuing to cultivate flax, together with students from the University of Crete and the Hellenic Mediterranean University, as well as with professors, teachers and farmers.

Showing students how to produce flax thread, Spili, Rethymnon

©Michael Skoulas

Communication and knowledge management

Leila Rossa Mouawad, IPROMO student

©FAO/Allison Bozzi

Communication and knowledge management are a key pillar of the MPS' work to promote the mountain agenda. The MPS' activities in this area of work are far-reaching and resonate with diverse audiences. Conducting studies and analyses; publishing technical reports; producing digital content for the web, video, social media and monthly newsletters; and collating UN reports – these are part of the MPS' communication strategy to ensure that mountain issues are given greater attention and investments internationally.

International Mountain Day 2023

A multilingual communication campaign driven by the MPS for International Mountain Day (IMD) included a FAO press release, story, social media cards and a photo contest. More than 100 articles were published by major national and international news outlets. FAO's social media content on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn was shared widely. Over 110 multilingual posts were published on FAO social media. FAO was also mentioned 1 368 times in related posts. The social media campaign had an estimated reach of 48 million users, with 37 500 engagements. In addition, IMD was mentioned in over 250 media clips, potentially reaching more than 1 billion people.

RESTORING
MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS
International Mountain Day 2023
Celebration

Celebrating IMD in Romania
©Dănuț Ungureanu

UIAA
11 December
International
MOUNTAIN DAY
2023

Celebrating IMD in Azerbaijan
©Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Regions

Shaping change for the common good of mountain women

The MPS together with the Feminist Hiking Collective – a non-profit organization and an MP member – launched a booklet *Mountain women of the world – Shaping change for the common good* on 25 November 2023, marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The publication aims to highlight how the international community can support the collective power and autonomy of mountain women.

Building on the challenges and opportunities identified in the MPS' 2022 study *Mountain women of the world: Challenges, resilience and collective power*, the booklet focuses on mountain women's own insights on resilience, as well as on their ideas for the way forward and actions needed to support their collective work. The publication draws on in-depth interviews with 313 mountain women in Argentina, Chile, Italy, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the United Republic of Tanzania, and highlights their testimonies and stories of change, transformation and solidarity.

Canada Camp, Mount Aconcagua expedition

©Patricia Breuer Moreno

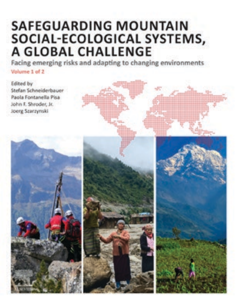
Tracking tourism flows in mountains

Despite the growing popularity of mountain tourism, there is a lack of comprehensive data on its size and socioeconomic impacts. The report *Understanding and quantifying mountain tourism*, published in 2023 by FAO, UN Tourism and the MPS, aims to increase understanding of a sector that accounts for 9–16 percent of all international tourist arrivals. Measuring the volume of visitors to mountains is the first crucial step. With the right data, better control can be applied to dispersing visitor flows, supporting adequate planning, improving knowledge on visitor patterns, building sustainable products in line with consumer needs, and creating suitable policies that will foster sustainable development and ensure that tourism activities benefit local communities.

Tourists at Mardi Himal base camp in Nepal
©Susheel Kumar Shrestha

Safeguarding mountain social-ecological systems

The United Nations University's Institute for Environment and Human Security and Eurac Research's joint GLOMOS programme published a book offering an overview of research on mountain regions worldwide, identifying existing challenges and presenting the diversity of mountain ecosystems in different regions. This first volume, *Safeguarding mountain social-ecological systems: A global challenge*, jointly published with Elsevier, addresses the challenges of safeguarding mountains and potential solutions, introducing the main networks and global efforts. It is based on state-of-the-art development in applied mountain research and provides an overview of mountain issues from a global perspective.



SAFEGUARDING MOUNTAIN SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS, A GLOBAL CHALLENGE
Facing emerging risks and adapting to changing environments
Volume 1 of 2
Edited by
Stefan Schneiderbauer
Paola Fontanella Pisa
John F. Shroder, Jr.
Joerg Szarzynski

Safeguarding mountain social-ecological systems: A global challenge

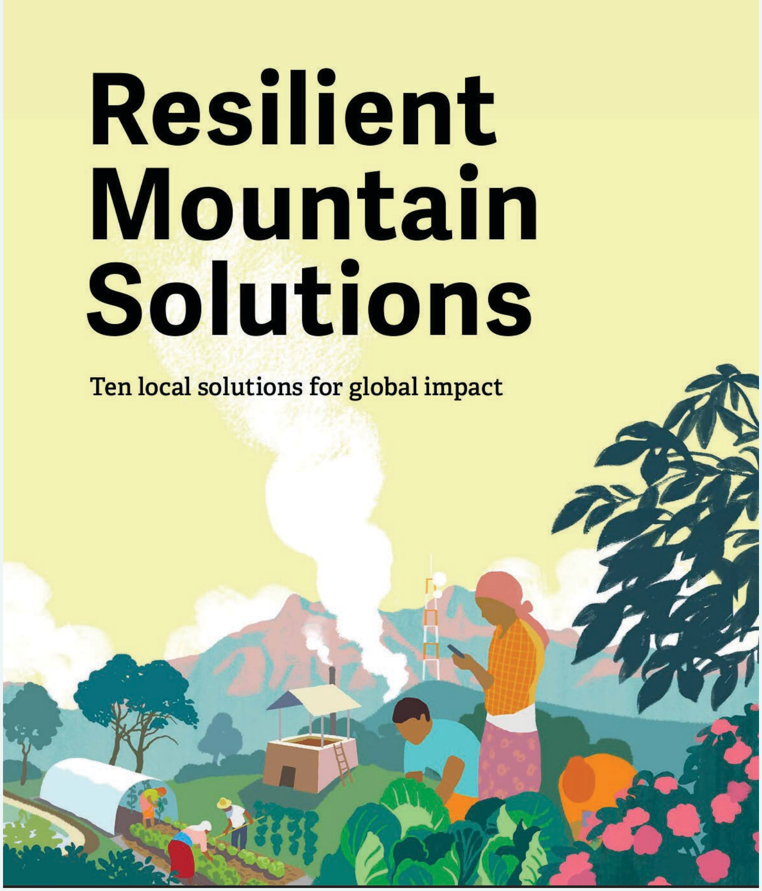
©GLOMOS & Elsevier

Mountains of Peru

©Noelia S. Bedoya-Perales

Solutions to enhance community resilience in the Hindu Kush Himalaya

The Resilient Mountain Solutions Initiative at ICIMOD, in collaboration with GRID-Arendal, launched *Resilient mountain solutions: Ten solutions for a global impact* in April 2023. The book presents ten efficient, cost-effective and custom-made solutions that have been tested in the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region. The solutions showcased are examples of diverse, nature-based solutions that provide long-term benefits to local communities, their environment and livelihoods by increasing their resilience to change. The publication also aims to inspire governments and decision-makers to upscale those solutions and increase their impact in HKH, as well as in other mountain regions around the world.


Resilient Mountain Solutions
Ten local solutions for global impact

Resilient Mountain Solutions
©GRID Arendal

Potential of nature-based solutions to provide benefits

The Nature-Based Solutions Initiative in Peru, hosted by the Instituto de Montaña in collaboration with the Nature-Based Solutions Initiative from the University of Oxford, has released a report, *Nature-based solutions and their socioeconomic benefits for Peru*. The document presents the findings of a study conducted in 2021 and 2022 on the potential of nature-based solutions (NbS) to contribute to post-COVID-19-pandemic recovery in Peru. It represents an initial effort to synthesize evidence of the socioeconomic benefits of NbS in a post-pandemic context and their contribution to building sustainable and resilient development in the country. Additionally, it provides a review of the available empirical literature on the socioeconomic and environmental benefits of various NbS experiences, both national and international.

Yanacancha - Huaquis cultural landscape

©Instituto de Montaña

Bloggers spotlight mountain destinations in Armenia, Georgia and Slovakia

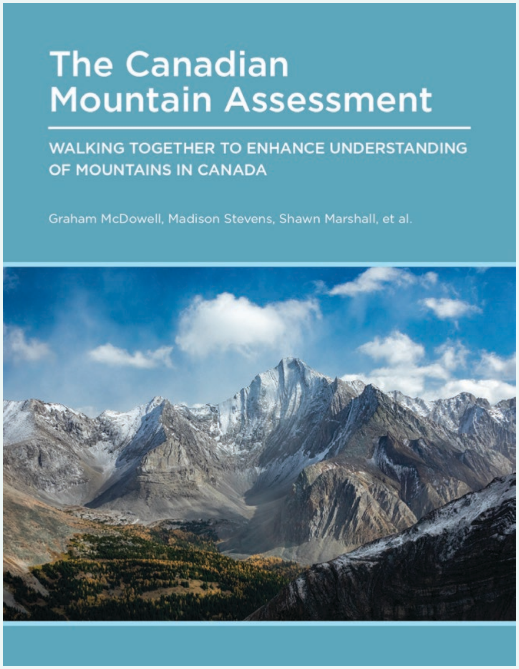
The project "Creative mountains", led by the Association for Nature Conservation Machaon International, takes an innovative approach to promoting cultural heritage in remote mountain areas of Armenia, Georgia and Slovakia. In 2023, the project helped bloggers and photographers to produce professional videos, photos and texts while visiting extraordinary natural sites and being immersed in the local culture of the mountain regions. As a result of the material shared by bloggers and photographers on their social media and websites, about 2 million people around the world were able to learn about the unique nature and folk culture of the mountains, and how these are being preserved and revitalized by local stakeholders.

URBARIÁT HRABUŠICE

Spotlight on travelling in Slovakia
©Linda Hermans

University of Calgary publishes assessment of Canada’s mountains

The Canadian mountain assessment provides a first-of-its-kind look at what is known, not known, and needs to be known about mountain systems in Canada. The assessment is based on insights from Indigenous knowledge of mountains, as well as findings from an extensive assessment of pertinent academic literature. Its inclusive knowledge co-creation approach brings these multiple forms of evidence together in ways that enhance collective understanding of mountains in Canada, while respecting and maintaining the integrity of different knowledge systems. The assessment aims to enhance appreciation for the diversity and significance of mountains in Canada, clarify challenges and opportunities for mountain systems in the country, and motivate and inform new research, relationships and actions that support the realization of desirable mountain futures.



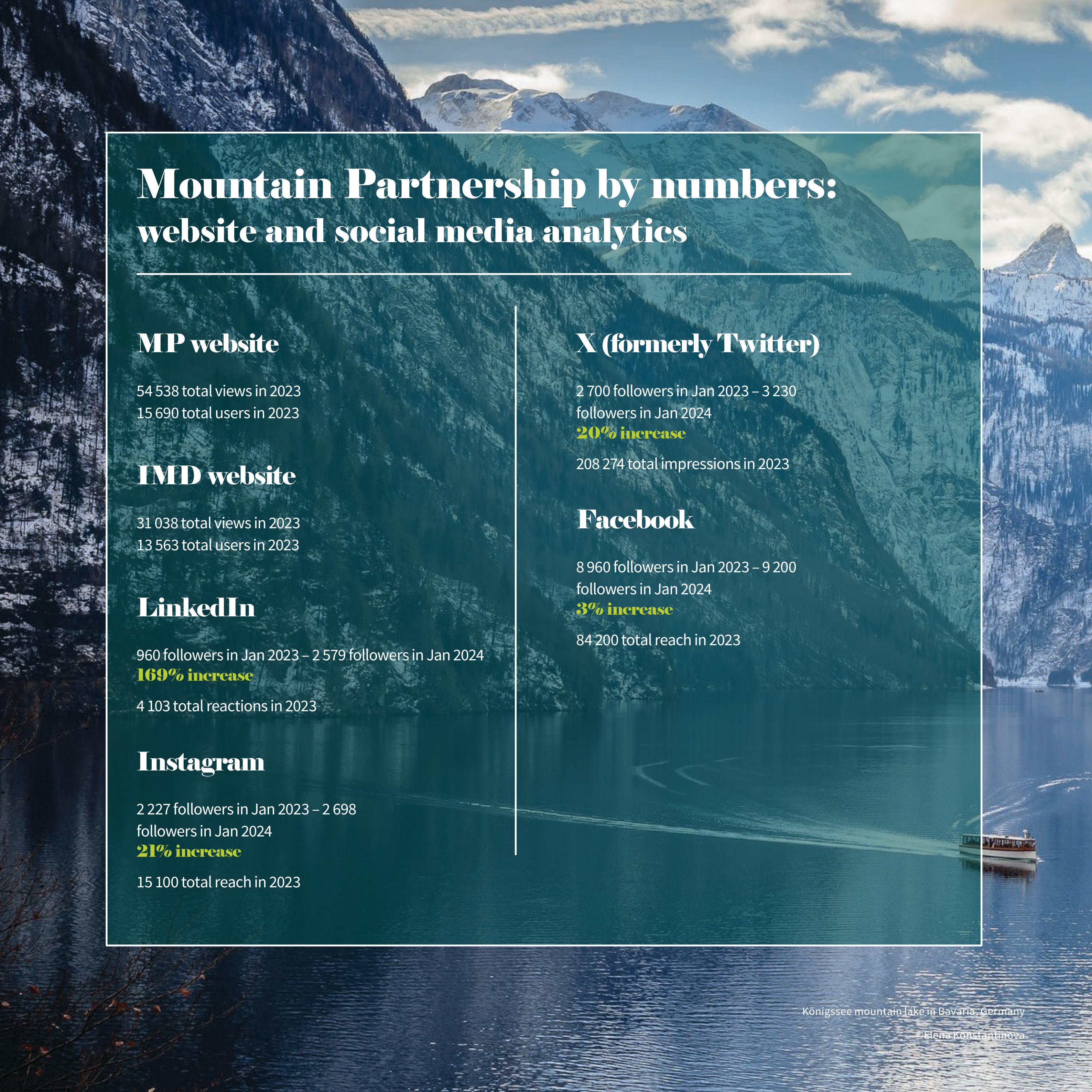
The Canadian Mountain Assessment

WALKING TOGETHER TO ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING OF MOUNTAINS IN CANADA

Graham McDowell, Madison Stevens, Shawn Marshall, et al.

The Canadian Mountain Assessment

©University of Calgary



Mountain Partnership by numbers:
website and social media analytics

MP website

54 538 total views in 2023
15 690 total users in 2023

IMD website

31 038 total views in 2023
13 563 total users in 2023

LinkedIn

960 followers in Jan 2023 – 2 579 followers in Jan 2024
169% increase

4 103 total reactions in 2023

Instagram

2 227 followers in Jan 2023 – 2 698 followers in Jan 2024
21% increase

15 100 total reach in 2023

X (formerly Twitter)

2 700 followers in Jan 2023 – 3 230 followers in Jan 2024
20% increase

208 274 total impressions in 2023

Facebook

8 960 followers in Jan 2023 – 9 200 followers in Jan 2024
3% increase

84 200 total reach in 2023

Königssee mountain lake in Bavaria, Germany

©Elena Konstantinova

Mountain Partnership outreach products

Videos

International Mountain Day 2023 theme video (English)

Video for Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027 (English)

International Mountain Day 2023 – Restoring mountain ecosystems (English)

Mountain women of the world – Shaping change for the common good (English)

Mountain Partnership Products Initiative (English)

GROW – Agrobiodiversity in a changing climate (English)

World Tourism Day 2023 (English)

World Environment Day 2023 (English)

Women move mountains (English)

Indigenous youth in mountains (English)

Publications

Building resilience into watersheds – A sourcebook (English)

Understanding and quantifying mountain tourism (English)

Mountain Partnership Secretariat 2022 Annual Report (English)

Mountain women of the world – Shaping change for the common good (English)

Restoring mountain ecosystems – Challenges, case studies and recommendations for implementing the UN Decade Principles for Mountain Ecosystem Restoration (English)

Resilient mountain ecosystems are key to climate adaptation.

International Mountain Day 2023 social media card
©FAO

Mountain women of the world

Mountain women of the world
©FAO

Farmers and pastoralists are stewards of mountain ecosystems.

International Mountain Day 2023 social media card
©FAO

MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP SECRETARIAT
ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Mountain Partnership Secretariat Annual Report 2022
©FAO

Training for action

Students at IPROMO

©FAO/Allison Bozzi

Each year, the MPS organizes summer courses, workshops and training sessions in collaboration with partners to boost capacity building, facilitate knowledge transfer, and foster expertise in various facets of sustainable mountain development.

> “IPROMO was empowering. I had the chance to learn in detail about different mountain ecosystems and how I, as a young forester, can contribute to the sustainability and protection of these delicate systems.”
>
> **-Ritikaa Gupta, IPROMO 2023 participant**

IPROMO 2023 celebrates young mountain leaders

The 16th annual IPROMO training course concluded on 25 July 2023 after two weeks of immersive on-site learning in the Italian Alps, dedicated to sustainable mountain development. The 2023 course's theme "Youth and the future of mountain forests" brought together 36 practitioners, all under 35, from 26 countries, making it IPROMO's youngest and largest cohort to date. Each participant received a diploma and 40 credit hours on completing the course.

The annual IPROMO course is jointly organized by the MPS, the University of Turin and the University of Tuscia, both in Italy, with the high patronage of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Karem Del Castillo Velázquez, IPROMO student

© FAO/Allison Bozzi

Eagle flying above Colca canyon

©Petra Dilthey

CONDESAN hosts second edition of IPROMO Latinoamericano

On 15 September 2023, the second edition of IPROMO Latinoamericano drew to a close, concluding an engaging two-week virtual training programme focused on the theme “Sustainable management of high altitude socioecosystems in Latin America: changes and continuity in mountain landscapes”. IPROMO Latinoamericano 2023 brought together 40 participants with diverse profiles and backgrounds from 10 Latin American countries for an enriching exchange of experiences and knowledge.

IPROMO Latinoamericano is organized biannually by the Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN), through the Adaptation at Altitude programme, and is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and supported by the MPS. It provides an opportunity to focus on the specific challenges of the Andes and other Latin American mountains and engage Spanish-speaking participants in the new framework, guiding effective mountain biodiversity protection in the Alpine and Carpathian regions, and supporting experience and knowledge sharing with other mountain regions of the world.

Sixth GROW training features live session at Expo 2023 Doha

The 6th annual GROW course "Agrobiodiversity in a changing climate" closed on 24 November 2023, with 29 participants from 20 countries. For the first time, one of GROW's lectures was conducted live from Expo 2023 in Doha. Organized by the MPS and the Italian Trade Agency in the Italian Pavilion, the workshop showcased new technologies and innovative initiatives focused on agrobiodiversity.

At the end of the two-week course, participant Ysa Calderón from Peru was announced as the winner of the 2023 GROW innovation contest. Her proposed project aims to protect biodiversity and addresses threats to pollinators such as climate change, pesticides and deforestation, with an emphasis on supporting women.

GROW is organized by the MPS, in collaboration with Sapienza University of Rome, Department of Environmental Biology, the Alliance of Biodiversity International and the Center for Tropical Agriculture, and the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research. Technical support is provided by FAO.

Paolo Toschi, Ambassador of Italy to Qatar and EXPO 2023 Commissioner General, and Sara Manuelli, MPS

©Italian Trade Agency

Trainings in assessing vulnerability in mountains held in Montenegro and Pakistan

The MPS, together with Sapienza University of Rome, conducted two national training sessions on mountain vulnerability assessment within the framework of the FAO project "Sustainable management of natural resources in mountain areas". The first, held 21–24 November 2023 at the FAO Pakistan Country Office, trained 19 participants from government institutions. The second, held 28 November–1 December 2023, trained ten participants from various government agencies in Montenegro. The training focused on the use of data and geospatial tools to estimate land degradation, based on a methodology developed by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and taking into account mountain communities' lack of access to facilities and services.

Fabio Grita leads a training session in Pakistan

©Marco Giallonardi

Strengthening mountain producers' certification systems

Recognizing the importance of smallholder agriculture and family farming in global food production and sustainable food systems, the MPS and IFOAM - Organics International have been working to provide training for mountain producers in participatory guarantee systems. Training in these innovative and cost-efficient organic certification systems comes within the framework of the Mountain Partnership Products initiative. In January, 13 Mountain Partnership Product producers representing 7 organizations from India, Kyrgyzstan and Nepal participated in training, followed in June by 81 producers, including 54 women, from Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Participatory guarantee systems training in Peru

©RAE Peru

New course explores sustainable water management in mountains

Given that more than half of humanity relies on mountain freshwater for everyday life, the careful management of mountain water resources is a global priority. The MPS, together with the University of Turin, facilitated the online course “Aqua Team for Sustainable Development” from 8–12 May to explore the latest advances in sustainable water management and investment. The two-week programme featured 16 lectures and discussions by high-level water experts from various countries, representing universities, research institutes, government agencies and the private sector.

Big Almaty Lake, Kazakhstan

©Rinat Mouratov

Pashmina training in Ladakh as the gateway to local entrepreneurship

To enhance the tourism value chain of Ladakh in northern India and generate supplementary livelihood opportunities for women, in March 2023, the Global Himalayan Expedition (GHE) selected 20 women and conducted a 30-day Pashmina weaving training workshop in the town of Leh. The objective was to empower these women with essential skills, tools and knowledge to produce market-ready Pashmina products. Following the training, each woman was equipped with a loom to continue designing and weaving Pashmina products at home. GHE committed to providing market linkage by promoting the products at local homestays catering to travellers seeking authentic mountain experiences. This initiative not only adds value to Ladakh's tourism chain, but also creates additional livelihood opportunities for women.

Ladakhi women learn Pashmina weaving

©GHE

Elevated alliances

ZHIMIN WU
DIRECTOR
FORESTRY DIVISION
FAO

Zhimin Wu, Forestry Division Director, speaks at the IYM closing ceremony

© FAO/Giulio Napolitano

The MP stands apart among mountain platforms thanks to its vibrant tapestry of stakeholders. Governments, civil society organizations and private sector entities converge here, each contributing their unique experiences and expertise. This rich diversity fuels collaboration and innovation, as evidenced by the 2023 influx of 64 new members, each boasting diverse perspectives. Strategic alliances were formed and existing ones strengthened, with the aim of turning bold ideas into impactful joint action and investments.

The MP's work would not be possible without the unwavering support of dedicated donors. The Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability of Andorra seconded a policy officer to the MPS in 2023. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and FAO also remained pillars of support, offering strategic guidance and crucial financial backing, and the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture reaffirmed its support to the MPS. Together, these contributions fuel the engine of collective action, propelling the MP towards a future where the diverse voices of mountains resonate in unison.

Governments of Montenegro and Nigeria join the Mountain Partnership

Two national governments became members of the MP in 2026 – the Governments of Montenegro and Nigeria – raising the total number of member governments to 66. Each government that is a member is represented in the MP by a specific ministry or agency. Montenegro is represented by the Directorate for Nature Protection of the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning, and Urbanism, and Nigeria is represented by the Federal Ministry of Environment. By joining the alliance, these governments commit to the MP's vision for a world by 2030 with empowered mountain communities and increased public and private sector commitment and investment in sustainable mountain development.

Village of Lubnice nestled in the mountains of northern Montenegro

©EBRD/FAO Dermot Doorly

MPS becomes honorary member of the International Mountain Museums Alliance

The International Mountain Museums Alliance (IMMA) welcomed the MPS as an honorary member during its 2023 annual assembly and meeting held 25–26 May. The IMMA also decided to become a member of the MP, joining the ranks of several Alliance museums that are already MP members. The IMMA was formed in 2015 under the auspices of the MP. It aims to provide a platform for collaboration and exchange between mountain museums internationally.

(Above and left) Representatives of the International Mountain Museum Alliance at FAO Headquarters in Rome

©Mountain Partnership Secretariat

MP member launches African NGO network to drive environmental sustainability

A network launched on 20 October 2023 by longstanding MP member the Albertine Rift Conservation Society and the Circular Bioeconomy Alliance aims to drive environmental sustainability in Africa. The African NGOs Alliance for Environmental Sustainability brings together leading non-governmental organizations to unify conservation efforts across the continent.

ARCOS Network launches African NGOs Alliance for Environmental Sustainability

©ARCOS

Adaptation at Altitude programme launches knowledge network.

The Adaptation at Altitude (A@A) programme has launched the A@A Knowledge Network, a global community for participants to share experiences and knowledge on climate change adaptation in mountain regions. The network provides an online space and discussion forum to share resources on different topics related to adaptation in mountains, and organizes events for stakeholders to share knowledge and innovative solutions in different regions. In 2023, the network enabled members to showcase their work and hear from experts on integrating local knowledge into solutions. The A@A Knowledge Network is open to new members interested in creating linkages and collaborating on mountain issues.

Adaptation at Altitude team in the Alps

©Zoï Environment Network

Andean Mountain Alliance strengthens regional collaboration

The Andean Mountain Initiative (AMI) continued its collaboration as a regional platform in 2023, with Colombia now the Regional Coordinator. A regional study on *Vulnerability and climate change in high mountains of the Andean region* was published. Regional and inter-regional exchange was promoted and strengthened through a visit to the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions, sharing experiences and participating in a series of exchanges about mountain range governance with government counterparts and the technical secretariats.

The AMI also took part in the International Páramos Summit in Bucaramanga, Colombia, and organized a webinar on resilient ways of life in the High Andes.

MINISTRSTVO ZA NARAVNE VIRE IN PROSTOR
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND SPATIAL PLANNING
ALPENKONVENTION
CONVENTION ALPINE
ALPSKA KONVENCIJA
CONVENZIONE DELLE ALPI

AMI delegates meeting with the Alpine Convention Presidency at the Ministry of the Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, Ljubljana, Slovenia

©Karen Price

Promoting exchange between regional mountain platforms

In June 2023, a delegation from the Andean Mountain Initiative attended the 14th Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee meeting in Poland and the 76th Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention in Slovenia, to discuss regional mountain range governance with government counterparts and the secretariats of the two mountain conventions. Several commonalities were highlighted, such as how to address the accelerating effects of the climate crisis on mountains at regional level, cultural specificities, and the need for science-policy interfaces. The findings of the meetings, exchanges and field visits were published in a Mountains Connect Governance Brief in early 2024. The study visit was organized by UNEP, CONDESAN, the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention Secretariat, and supported by the Adaptation at Altitude programme.

AMI Delegates, UNEP Team, Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, Mszana Dolna, Poland

©Karen Price

Romania launches a National Mountain Council

Established under Romanian law, a National Mountain Council was launched in 2023 with the participation of Romania's nine massif committees, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The Council aims to ensure cooperation between the Government and mountain representatives in the drafting and implementation of specific strategies and policies for mountains. The creation of the National Mountain Council is an important step for the future of mountains in Romania, and for ensuring that future policies contribute to sustaining the population and the local economy. The Secretariat for the massif committees and the National Mountain Council is hosted by the National Agency of the Mountain Area. The Council held its first meeting on 20 April 2023.

GUVERNUL ROMÂNIEI
GUVERNUL ROMÂNIEI
GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA

The National Mountain Council

©Dănuţ UNGUREANU

Regional climate solutions for the Rocky Mountains

Following an initiative launched by MP member the Aspen International Mountain Foundation (AIMF) at the Sixth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership, mountain leaders from the United States of America (USA)'s Rocky Mountain region have come together to tackle the effects of climate change. The Regional Climate Solutions Group, formed in the wake of the September 2022 meeting with support from AIMF, has been working to develop collective solutions to mountain sustainability challenges. Initiatives that have grown out of the group's meetings include a methane-capture programme, a regional multi-family household climate refit study, a geothermal proposal, and work to develop a regional net-zero new construction building code. Multi-jurisdiction conversations continue to explore further common efforts.

Mountains in Colorado, USA

©Matt TenBruggencate/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

Mountain women climb Mount Aconcagua

An international group of 14 women from the Mountain Women of the World network successfully completed an expedition to Mount Aconcagua in Argentina, the highest peak in the western hemisphere. The expedition brought together women from five countries for a collaborative experience with the aim of empowering them as mountain women – the guardians of mountains, nature and their communities. In recognition of their achievement, Nora Vicario, Minister of Culture and Tourism of Argentina, honoured the athletes during a ceremony at the Cornelio Moyano Museum of Natural and Anthropological Sciences.

Mountain women trekking through Peru

©Patricia (Pato) Breur Moreno

Mountain Partnership Steering Committee

Meeting of the Mountain Partnership Steering Committee

©Matt TenBruggencate/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

The Steering Committee of the Mountain Partnership provides programmatic orientation to the MP, overseeing the preparation of a four-year strategy and a two-year workplan. The 18-member body guides the work of the MPS, as well as implementation of the Mountain Agenda and the achievements and impacts of their respective electoral groups. Steering Committee members are elected to four-year terms by the various membership categories and regions and select a chair and vice-chairs at their first meeting. They meet at least once a year.

The following governments and organizations are serving on the 2022–2025 Steering Committee:

Donor organization to the MPS

- Italy (Chair)

Governments

- Asia and the Pacific: Nepal
- Central Asia: Kyrgyzstan
- Europe: Andorra, Romania (alternate)
- Near East and North Africa: Yemen
- North and Central America and the Caribbean: The Dominican Republic (Vice Chair), Guatemala (alternate)
- South America: Peru, Argentina (alternate)
- Sub-Saharan Africa: Malawi, Uganda (alternate)

Host institution of the MPS

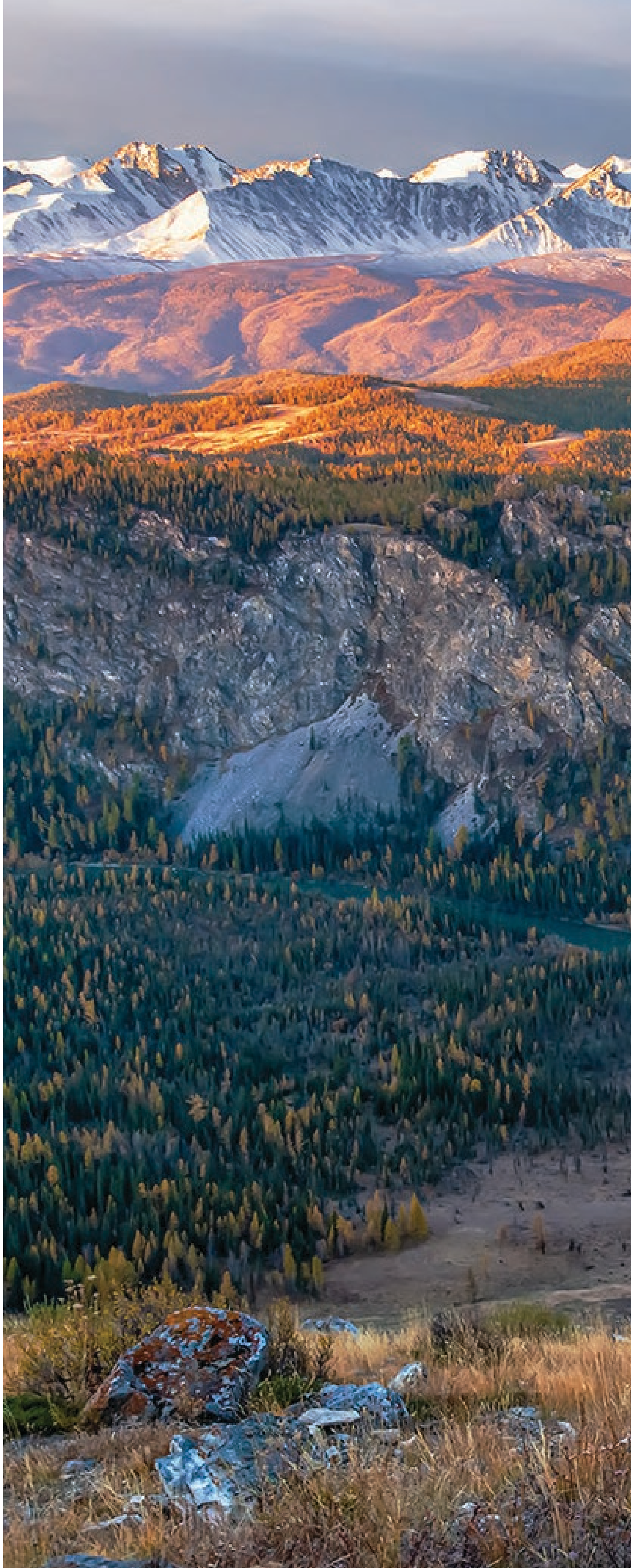
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Intergovernmental organizations

- United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations University (alternate)

Major group organizations

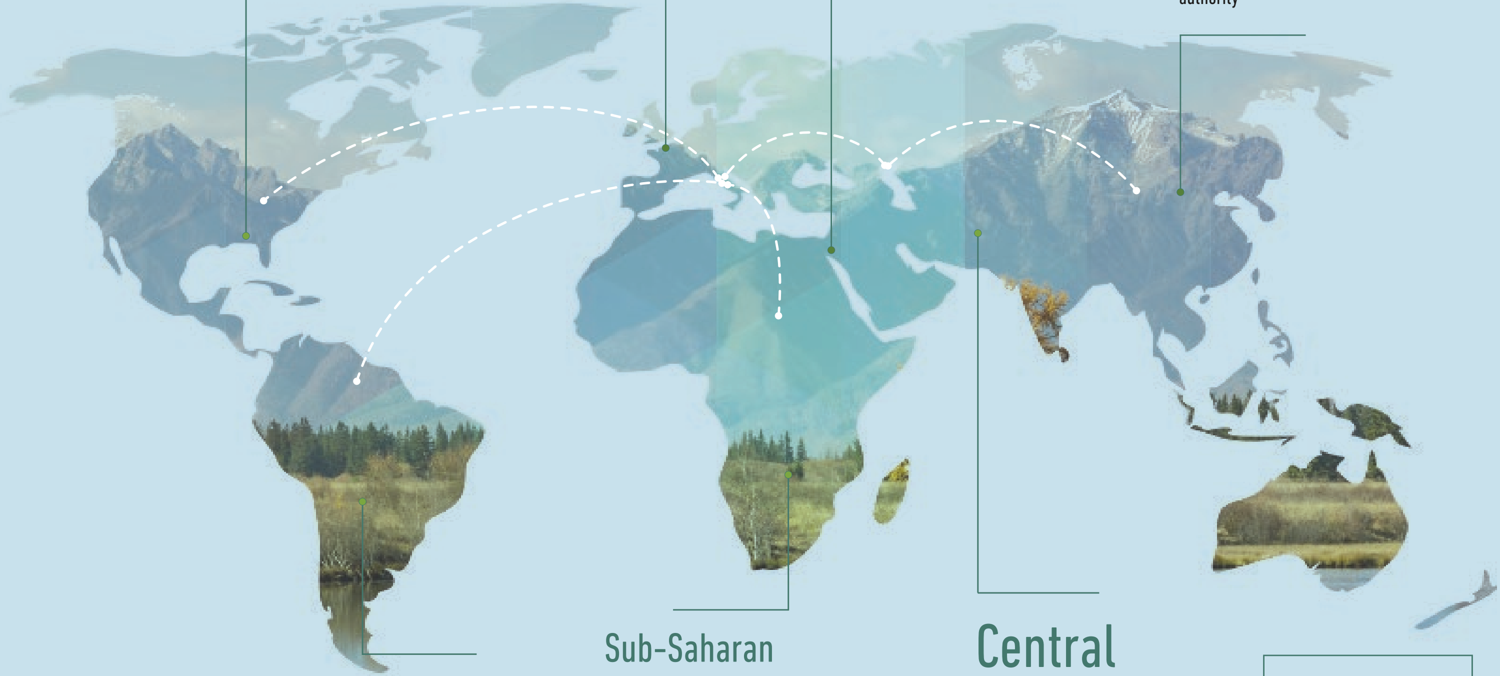
- Asia and the Pacific: Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (Vice Chair), Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation (alternate)
- Central Asia: Tajik Social and Ecological Union, Rural Development Fund (alternate)
- Europe: Centro de Investigação de Montanha and Euromontana, Albanian Alps Alliance (alternate)
- Global civil society organizations: GRID-Arendal, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (alternate)
- Near East and North Africa: Coalition Civile pour la Montagne, Mountain Environment Protection Society (alternate)
- North and Central America and the Caribbean: Aspen International Mountain Foundation
- South America: Centro de Estudios de Alta Montaña, Crescente Fértil (alternate)
- Sub-Saharan Africa: Foundation for Environment and Development



Chui steppe, Russia

©Vladimir Ivanov

Standing together – the Mountain Partnership community



North & Central America and the Caribbean

7 governments:
Costa Rica / Cuba / the Dominican Republic / Guatemala / Jamaica / Mexico / Panama + 43 NGOs + 6 subnational authorities

Europe

19 governments:
Andorra / Armenia / Austria / Azerbaijan / France / Georgia / Italy / Liechtenstein / Monaco / Montenegro / North Macedonia / Romania / Serbia / Slovakia / Slovenia / Spain / Switzerland / Türkiye / Ukraine + 108 NGOs + 3 subnational authorities

Near East and North Africa

6 governments:
Algeria / the Islamic Republic of Iran / Jordan / Morocco / Tunisia / Yemen
+ 12 NGOs

Asia and the Pacific

11 governments:
Afghanistan / Bangladesh / Bhutan / India / Indonesia / Korea Forest Service / Nepal / Pakistan / Papua New Guinea / the Philippines / Sri Lanka + 101 NGOs + 1 subnational authority

South America

7 governments:
Argentina / the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela / Chile / Colombia / Ecuador / Peru / the Plurinational State of Bolivia + 44 NGOs

Sub-Saharan Africa

13 governments:
Burundi / Cameroon / the Democratic Republic of the Congo / Eswatini / Ghana / Guinea / Kenya / Lesotho / Madagascar / Malawi / Nigeria Federal Ministry of Environment / Togo / Uganda + 46 NGOs + 1 subnational authority

Central Asia

3 governments:
Kyrgyzstan / Tajikistan / State Committee on Forestry of Republic of Uzbekistan + 47 NGOs + 1 subnational authority

GLOBAL

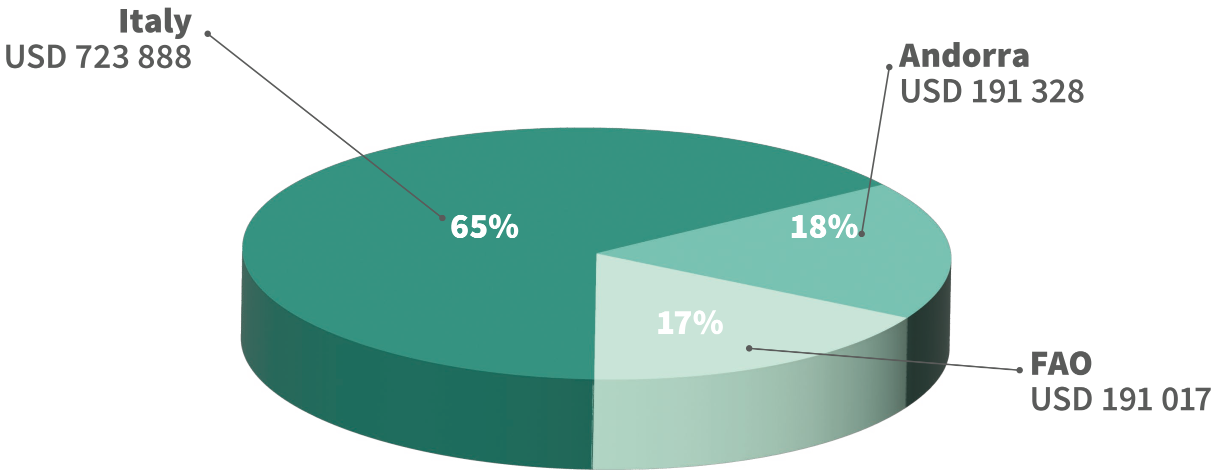
22 intergovernmental organizations

36 global major groups

Ysa Calderón, GROW innovation contest winner

©Ysa Calderón CEO of Sumak Kawsay

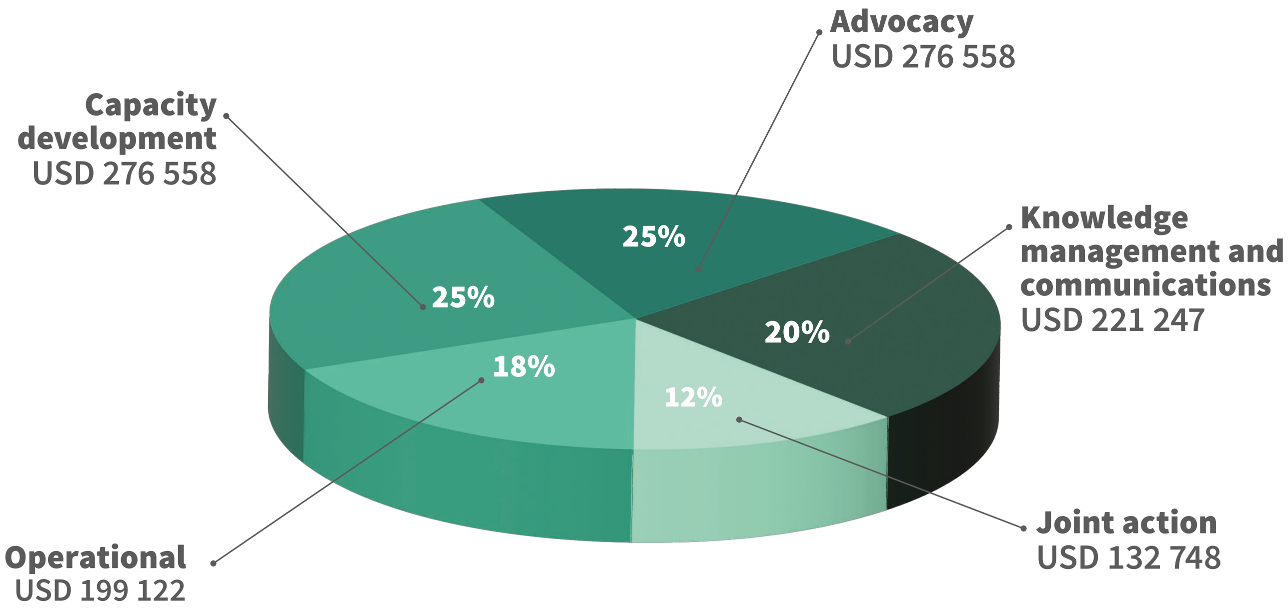
Financial overview



Resource partners
Italy, Andorra, FAO

Total (100%):
USD 1 106 233

Functions



Total (100%):
USD 1 106 233

Meet the Secretariat

The Mountain Partnership is supported by a Secretariat hosted at FAO and is sponsored by the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability of the Principality of Andorra, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Office of Agriculture, and FAO.

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Confederaziun svizra

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